



State of Wisconsin
Department of Health Services

Jim Doyle, Governor
Karen E. Timberlake, Secretary

Assembly Committee on Public Health

Tuesday, July 28, 2009

AB 313

Wisconsin Department of Health Services

Rachel Currans-Sheehan, Legislative Liaison

Chairman Benedict and members of the Public Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present information on Wisconsin's Emergency Medical Services program.

The emergency medical services system works to get the needed resources to assure the safe and effective delivery of pre-hospital emergency care to the citizens and visitors of Wisconsin. There are currently 488 EMS organizations in the state of Wisconsin. About 64% of those providers are owned and operated by a local municipality. 25% are owned by a private, non-profit organization. The remaining 10% are for profit organizations that are in the business of providing ambulance transport. Overall, there are about 19,655 licensed EMTs working within the 488 EMS organizations.

There are four levels of EMT ambulance services provided in Wisconsin: Basic, Intermediate Technician, Intermediate, and Paramedic. Regardless of the level of training, all EMTs must be licensed and certified in Wisconsin.

Under Chapter 256.15, DHS may assess licensure fees for EMTs; however, employees of public agencies who work for volunteer or paid-on call ambulance services providers are exempt from EMT-basic licensure fees.

AB 313 expands the licensure fee exemption to any EMT-basic licensee who will receive "no income for providing EMT services under the license" regardless of their employing agency.

DHS has not exercised its authority to assess licensure fees under Chap. 256.15 at this time; however, it may be necessary in the future to levy fees on licenses to support EMS operations.

The purpose of allowing DHS authority to collect fees is to ensure that the programs within EMS are funded and to guarantee volunteers are properly equipped, provide proper oversight, and to support a continuing effort to assure consistent quality care across our state.

Many other licensed professionals who serve the public must pay a fee in order to be licensed and assure standards are met. The state of Wisconsin has the same professional standard and licensing requirements regardless if the person is a volunteer or career provider, thus ensuring a consistent quality of care across our state.

At this time, current administrative/data barriers of identifying EMT-basic volunteers employed by public agencies would necessitate that the Department exempt all EMT-basic volunteers to implement any fee exemption for EMT-basic volunteers.

While AB 313 statutorily expands the number of individuals exempt from fees, in practice this change is unlikely to have direct fiscal impact on the Department given that the number of EMT-basics impacted by this legislation is expected to be quite modest.

Given the importance of the volunteer EMT-basic workforce for the delivery of services in many rural communities, the Department registers no objections to this change.

Thank you. I'd be happy to take any questions you may have.